

The Library Assistant:

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Editorials and Announcements	25
The Librarian's Need : Courage. By W. A. Phillips	29
Our Glorious Future	34
The Library Assistant : Past and Present. By F. E. Sandry	37
The Divisions	41
New Members	42
Books of the Month	43
Correspondence. Appointments	44

EDITORIALS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Next Meeting of the Association will be held at 7.30 p.m., on **February 10th**, in the Stoke Newington Public Library, 158, Church Street, N.16. Mr. S. Kirby, F.L.A., Chief Assistant, Chelsea Public Library, will read a paper entitled: "On Reading and Readers." Councillor Sir Herbert J. Ormond, J.P., Chairman of the Libraries Committee will be in the Chair.

The Junior Section will meet at 6.30 p.m., when Mr. Alan Stonebridge of St. Marylebone, will speak on "Anthologies." Light refreshments will be served at 7 p.m.

The Library, which has recently been converted to the "open-access" system will be open for inspection from 5.30 p.m.

The nearest railway stations are Dalston and Stoke Newington. Buses Nos. 67, 73 and 173a pass the Library. Buses Nos. 21 and 21a, and Trams Nos. 41 and 51, go to Paradise Row, Green Lanes. Trams Nos. 47 and 49 go to Church Street.

Our South London Dance will be held on Wednesday, February 17th, from 7.30 to 11.30 p.m., in the Lower Hall, Battersea Town Hall, Lavender Hill, Clapham Junction. Godfrey's Orchestra which was so much appreciated at the Islington dance will provide the music.

Tickets, price 1s. 6d., *exclusive* of refreshments, may be obtained by post from Mr. R. Wright, Public Library, Earlsfield, S.W.18., or personally from:—

Mr. Cooper, Battersea.

Miss Exley, St. Marylebone.

Mr. Cross, Croydon.

Miss Rees, Fulham.

Mr. Smith, Bethnal Green.

Will every London member please make a special effort to sell some tickets, as the financial success of these dances is necessary to their continuance.

Other Arrangements for 1926 are:—

March 17th.—At Leighton House, Kensington.

Speaker: Mr. W. T. Creed, F.L.A., Deputy Librarian, Fulham.

Subject: "Local Collections in London Municipal Libraries."

Chairman: Mr. W. Wadley, F.L.A., Borough Librarian.

April 21st.—At Kingston-on-Thames Public Library.

Speaker: Mr. Hilary Jenkinson, M.A., F.S.A.

Subject: "Research work at the Public Record Office."

(Illustrated by Lantern slides.)

Chairman: Mr. Benjamin Carter, F.L.A., Borough Librarian.

May 12th.—Day Excursion to Reading. Magazine meeting early in the evening.

Chairman: Mr. William H. Greenhough, F.L.A., Chief Librarian.

June 16th.—Annual Meeting.

The Library Association's official representatives for the Philadelphia meeting of the A. L. A., are Messrs. F. Pacy, S. A. Pitt, and Walter Powell. This alliterative selection is in keeping with the traditions of the L. A. for was not Mr. L. Stanley Jast sent to St. Louis as official representative in 1904?

East Lothian.—Many assistants are no doubt aware of the fact that the East Lothian Education Committee appointed a clerk to the position of County Librarian at £200 per annum because they could not get a librarian at £100 below the usual figure for such posts; few assistants, however, know of the pinchbeck scheme underlying the whole affair. We have heard of the proverbial meanness of the Scot; we have been across the Border and know by experience that it is a libel, yet, here we have a public authority doing their best to prove the truth of the charge as is evidenced in the letter we print below which was sent to various booksellers in Scotland. The Education Authority seems unable to differentiate between the bookseller and the librarian for one thing; the other implications we leave to our readers.

EAST LoTHIAN EDUCATION AUTHORITY.

EDUCATION OFFICES,
HADDINGTON.

21st December, 1925.

County Rural Library Scheme.

DEAR SIR,

I enclose herewith a list of books, which it is proposed to purchase for my Authority's County Rural Library Scheme.

I shall be obliged if you will be good enough to send me an estimate for supplying and delivering (in part or in whole), the books named therein, detailing the edition and cost of each.

The estimate should include the cost of classification under the Dewey Decimal System, stamping books, in gilt with class letter and number, and in blind with the name of the Authority (as arranged) providing and fixing labels and cutting and collating all books.

A Loose Leaf Accessions Register and Complete Card Catalogue, both with the names of books, etc., typed thereon, should also be supplied.

A Statement of any further Library Service which you are in a position to offer, should be included in the estimate.

Alternative quotations should be given where good second-hand copies are available.

Kindly return the list of books.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) R. D. ROBERTSON,

Executive Officer.

"*Euterpe*, or, the future of art," by Mr. L. R. McColvin, Chief Librarian of Ipswich, is the latest addition to Kegan Paul's "To-day and To-morrow" series. Briefly, the argument is that art is largely governed by commercial factors, the reasons for this, and suggestions of means whereby people may be led to an enjoyment of the beautiful. Public libraries come in for commendation, and are instanced as an obvious means of circulating the good that lies within the covers of a book. With some of Mr. McColvin's arguments we cannot agree; they defeat their own purpose. He looks forward to the day when the pianoforte will no longer be manufactured; the piano-player will take its place, and we shall have no more amateurs and dreary routine of "teaching the piano." We are left wondering how a man will become a Master without the drudgery of learning! In the new age the notes will be churned out with mechanical correctness; the Soul will have fled and with it, Art.

Bulletins. We receive from time to time, bulletins and guides from various libraries for review. Rarely are we able to include such reviews on account of space, but from the number of library magazines that we have seen, we notice there is a very welcome tendency to get away from the mere chronicle of additions. Coventry, we notice, invariably gets a short article by a well-known writer, Edinburgh includes a series of evaluative book notes, and has just published a Junior bulletin on an altogether new plan, to be distributed to scholars about to leave school.

The Society of Bookmen has arranged a course of five lectures, to be delivered at Mortimer Hall, 93, Mortimer Street, W.1., at 8.30 p.m., as under :—

- February 4th.—Mr. Compton Mackenzie, "Reading."
 " 11th.—Mr. C. R. Sanderson, "Public Libraries and Reading."
 " 25th.—Mr. Philip Guedalla, "Reading History."
 March 11th.—Mr. St. John Ervine, "Reading Plays."
 " 25th.—Mr. Michael Sadleir, "Reading Back."

Admission is by ticket : Reserved Course ticket, 7s. 6d. ; Unreserved, 4s. ; Single tickets, 1s. Apply to Secretary, National Book Council, 30, Little Russell Street, W.C.1.

The Hon. Secretary of the A. A. L., Public Library, Bancroft Road, Mile End, E.1., has twelve complimentary tickets for Mr. Sanderson's lecture, for which early application should be made.

January Meeting.—It reflects great credit on all who were in any way connected with the arrangement of the programme for this meeting to say that it was highly successful from start to finish. About one hundred members and friends assembled at 3 p.m. for a visit to Lambeth Palace which was followed by a tour round the Houses of Parliament. Interested parties subsequently had the pleasure of being conducted through the various departments of the Battersea Polytechnic where, in addition, refreshments were generously provided. The junior meeting was a decided improvement on previous ones, a contributing factor being a very sensible paper on "The Future of the Children's Library" which was read by Mr. L. M. Harrod of the Fulham Staff. The ordinary meeting was well attended and it was a pity that the paper read by Mr. Sandry could not have been broadcasted to those members of the profession who are not members of a professional association. Mr. Sandry succeeded in evoking a lengthy and somewhat heated discussion, but many were delightfully misled by his subtle humour, although he put us all on our guard by stating at the outset that it was to be a matter of fact paper. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded him on the motion of Mr. J. G. O'Leary of Bethnal Green, while the thanks of the meeting were accorded the Principal and Governors of the Battersea Polytechnic on the motion of the President, Mr. H. A. Sharp.

Work of the Council.—The Council met prior to the Battersea meeting. There was little to report, the only outstanding item of discussion being the advertising rates for the Journal.

A.A.L. Library.—New rule : The maximum number of books that can be borrowed at one time is four.

A. A. L. Series.—The stock in hand is being rapidly depleted by frequent sales. Those who wish to obtain copies of the pamphlets in print should order them as indicated on p. 4 of the cover.

Appointments.—Assistants are requested to send to the Hon. Editor for publication, particulars of appointments and changes affecting them.

The Distribution of the Journal is in the hands of Mr. J. L. Gilliam, Central Library, Croydon, to whom all communications concerning distribution should be sent.

Publication of the Journal.—We go to Press on the 20th of the month. Matter for inclusion in the next number should be in our hands by the 18th.

THE LIBRARIAN'S NEED: COURAGE.

(Contd. from page 18.)

By W. A. PHILLIPS, *Liverpool Public Libraries,*
President, North Western Division.

To revert to my theme, progress. During this same period we have passed from the dark ages of ledger and other crude charging methods to the modern enlightened open-access period; and we have discarded the old forms of catalogue arranged in rough classes in favour of the modern scientific annotated class list, and instead of arranging books by their sizes they are placed in orderly and logical progression of classes. Improvements have also been effected in borrowing facilities for readers, and in the important matter of service conditions for staffs. As the older members can well remember, library service in the past was subjected to long hours, lack of recognition, and excessive freedom from excessive pay. Although much has been done to remedy these disabilities, there is still scope for improvement, and this will probably be effected by the recruitment of better educated assistants and the self-education of present members of the profession, which will bring in their train more equitable salaries and conditions of service.

The latest development in our history is the present government inquiry into public libraries. This inquiry is, to my mind, a sign that things might happen—things have been known to happen after a government inquiry—and I crave your indulgence in favour of a glance into the future. Library policy will be greatly changed. I see a reconstructed Board of Education bifurcating into divisions (a) scholastic, and (b) library. The library side will link up the whole of the public and rate supported libraries of the country, the present national, municipal and rural libraries being thus welded into one complete national system. In this way, and through the medium of co-operation, the various institutions will be strengthened by the availability of a national stock numbering millions of volumes. For the exchange of volumes there will be established a central clearing

house, which will also make possible the materialisation of a national British general bibliography. Local government will still largely pertain, each district electing its own separate education and library committees. Adoption of the acts will, of course, become compulsory, and all work and activities will be subject to government inspection.

The greatest changes locally will be carried out in the large towns such as Manchester and Liverpool. The reference libraries in these towns will be developed much as at present—Manchester probably developing a building—but the lending libraries will be entirely re-organised.

In each large city there will be four or five district lending libraries, libraries in the best sense of the word, with the poorer type of fiction rigidly excluded. In these libraries, then, we shall find a first rate stock of non-fictional works replete with the best technical and educational works possible. Books in little demand and of greater cost will be divided out and interchanged when required. There will probably be a special music library and a special medical library. The existing branch libraries will be developed into first class children's libraries, comprising lending library, reading room and lecture hall—the whole being worked in the closest co-operation with the elementary schools. This junior service will be not merely passive in character, but brimming with life, and combining all the existing known forms of junior library development together with still newer methods of work. The present reading rooms for adults will be continued on a slightly smaller scale than at present exists, and as an annexe to each building there will be a fiction depot for adults. This fiction depot will also serve as a delivery station for the main district library and for the special libraries. Can you not see the increased utility that would be gained by the district library when freed from its fiction shackles? We find recognition of this principle in other departments of life. The university, the commercial and technical schools are not hampered with the kindergarten or elementary school, commercial and reference libraries are not fiction clogged, and the Divorce and Admiralty Courts do not have to deal with criminal law proceedings. Specialisation leads to efficiency, and our lending libraries would gain in utility when standard works of study were segregated from popular works of fiction.

Candidates for admission to the library service will either submit to examination as for existing Civil Service appointments, or preferably they will enter the service after matriculation, and after a period of pupilage or apprenticeship proceed to a training school of librarianship. Then, armed with the diploma of proficiency, they will be ready for service in the divisions of library

work for which they are best fitted. Specialisation will be a feature of the training, although such studies will be supplemental to the general course.

From our dream let us revert to matters of established fact. America has to its credit a solid achievement of progress. Library history there ranges from crude beginnings to a well organised service, comprising magnificent and well stocked buildings, with elaborately equipped sectional and children's libraries, far reaching travelling libraries, special libraries of all kinds, efficient organisations for co-operation with various outside educational agencies, co-operative cataloguing, numerous schools of library science, and many conference loving professional associations. Everything is organised and developed to a high pitch; and with recognition ripe and money plentiful, methods and equipment are generous to a high degree. This elaboration of library methods in America is probably due in some measure to the national necessity of rapid assimilation of foreign elements introduced into the country through immigration channels.

Now, none of this progress has been achieved by a Micawber-like inaction, but rather by the application of constructive thought upon the needs of the day, and by the bold enunciation of the resulting progressive schemes by men and women courageous enough to place their scientific imagination at the disposal of the community. The offer of such a gift is not always sufficient in itself, for new ideas often require the application of considerable driving force to ensure their adoption, this laying the double strain of thought and action on the originator. For instance, the pioneer of open access in England, the late James Duff Brown, had to fight hard and counter much criticism and opposition from what might be called the "indicator school" before his proposals met with any measure of success. It is a strange inconsistency of this dear old world of ours that progress has always to fight hard to make a way. We see this in foreign countries such as Tibet and China; in our own country; and, of more intimate concern for the moment, in our own profession. And we must be careful to guard against the encroachment of such a stand still and even reactionary spirit into our own lives, and into our professional careers, with a resulting deafening to the call of progress. Our business lives must be one long record of achievement and advancement: educational, social and professional.

We should have faith in the future of our calling and should show courage in upholding its dignity and in defending it in the face of critics and scoffers should attempts be made to belittle our libraries. We should never for one moment permit ourselves to speak in slighting terms of our profession, for although

at times we may feel dissatisfied with it we should realise and remember that we are ourselves in some measure responsible for its condition. We should, therefore, rather devote our minds to schemes of improvement than indulge in such unfortunate discussion.

It should again be emphasised that it is largely owing to the faith of past workers and their courage to engage in the work of development that librarianship has reached its present state of development. This present state has been handed down to us of this day by our predecessors. It is now our duty and privilege to "carry on" and perfect it still further; and the proof of our value as a body of workers will be evidenced by the state in which we in turn hand it over to our successors.

The world's estimate of our profession is likely to be measured by its value to the community. By value I mean intrinsic value and not that expressed in terms of pounds, shillings and pence, of buildings, and of stocks of books; but rather of service in the best sense of the word, rendered freely and cheerfully to the public. And in similar ratio is the assistant expected by the profession to give of his best. Each librarian or assistant can help the profession by increasing the sum value of his professional utility, by advancing himself to the utmost legitimate extent; by educational proficiency, by painstaking work, and by the display of imaginative powers, all of which will reflect credit both to himself and to his profession.

Towards a better appreciation of our position on the part of the public, I would suggest that a careful propaganda relative to our profession be instituted on every possible occasion. It is to be expected that, viewed from the public side of the desk, our duties must, at first glance, seem more or less mechanical, the dating of books and the manipulation of cards and trays not having sufficient visible intricacy and swerve to impress observers. And it is possible to conceive that our values are appraised according to these unfortunate outward appearances.

We should therefore endeavour to explain that librarianship constitutes more than a rapid sorting of cards and indexes; and all available opportunities should be seized to enlarge upon the dignity of our profession, the lofty nature and high importance of our duties, the requisite technical skill called into play in the higher branches of our work, the necessity for sound education and for later studies.

We have now to examine our subject, "Courage," in its third phase, i.e., in the Associational aspect.

Most, one might say all, professions and trades organise societies or associations to look after the professional and often social interests of their members. We all know of the Medical

Association, of the Society of Chartered Accountants, the Chemists' Association, and scores of others. In keeping with the times our own profession boasts two associations. The senior of these, the Library Association, claims to represent the profession in general, but as admission to membership is dependent on certain definite qualifications, and as the fees are comparatively heavy, the junior assistant must perforce remain outside the organisation, and is expected to look with reverence and awe at its activities from outside the august fold. There remains, then, our own association for the accommodation of the junior. According to the official pamphlet, "the Association of Assistant Librarians was founded in 1895 to provide opportunities for persons engaged in library work (other than chief librarians) to meet together for the discussion of matters of professional interest, and for operating collectively in any direction calculated to benefit library conditions and librarianship generally. Only assistants engaged in legitimate library work in public, institutional and private libraries are admitted to membership. The association is, therefore, the only purely professional body formed in the interests of librarians, and is thus enabled to give the most free and full attention to professional affairs. It aims at bringing library workers together for two reasons: to enable them to become acquainted with one another and to promote discussion of professional matters inculcating an exchange of ideas and the attainment of a wider outlook on library matters. One might conceive one step further: the association to be as a sack of shakings. Ideas would be submitted, discussed and improved upon, and assembled for future use by members. I would further suggest that the Education committee of our own branch be so organised that it might be utilised as an advisory bureau or committee for the purpose of helping and advising members on educational or professional matters. I can assure members that the inauguration of such a feature would have my sympathy and support during my term of office should there be shown any desire for its adoption.

This is the ideal set forth by and on behalf of the association. Unfortunately, however, the average assistant does not reciprocate, with the result that we sometimes have sparsely attended meetings and a general lack of interest shown in the affairs of the association. Is such a state of things a wholesome one? I say, most emphatically, NO!

To overcome this I would urge everyone to display courage in a more effective support of the association. As we have been tardy of support in the past, let us now mend our ways. We must not remain amongst the critical spectators, but must come right in the ring and participate in the events. We should

come forward with a determination to do big things; to help the officers—better still, to accept office ourselves, and to imbue others with the same spirit. We should be prepared to attend meetings, take part in discussion and read “papers.” The reading of “papers” is of great value, both to the members generally and to the enterprising individuals who prepare them.

As in the case of the profession generally, we should also be prepared to defend the association in the face of disparaging remarks. This really requires more courage than would seem necessary on the face of things, for it is no light matter to have to advocate what may be at the time, or in the company, an unpopular cause.

Although much of the foregoing refers to the junior assistant, one must also add that there is a real necessity for a general display of courage in all grades, and that even more is expected of the senior officer than is of the younger assistant. And while finding the same progression of necessity in the Chief Officer we reach the culminating point in the Committee itself, which should by its actions set a noble example to the Staff.

And before my station closes down, I have just one final thought to offer for your consideration. Ours is a noble profession, eager for the advancement of learning and the spread of culture in a much more broad and generous spirit than the mere academical educationists. Take care to preserve its nobility by your thoughts, your principles, your actions, your good work and your missionary spirit. Do nothing and say nothing to belittle this conception. Aim high and achieve greatness for your own success and lofty spirit will be reflected in the profession itself. Do not allow the pursuit of pleasure to intervene and destroy these noble ideals. See that you advance on the right road and inculcate in others this worthy spirit. A question each one should ask himself is: “What am I doing in the good work? Am I doing my duty to myself, to my profession, and to my association? My profession has afforded me a life’s work; my association has looked after my educational and professional interests—what am I doing in return?”

OUR GLORIOUS FUTURE.

There used to exist in the years now gone, a very important and useful official who after many years of hard work and public neglect (and sometimes even derision), was gradually receiving the reward of his labours, and the sweets of his enthusiasms, when an unexpected turn of affairs brought him to the same sad fate as the dodo. He was known as the Public Librarian. The peculiar manner of his going was in this wise. In the troublous and disturbing years that followed the official ending of the Great War at the beginning

almost of the twentieth century, prices were high, living was dear (and low), unemployment was rife, and competition very keen. It was the age of collective action. Men and women in various trades and professions banded themselves together for mutual defence and attack. The employed class, generally, for defence; the employers, for attack. The Public Librarian was too dignified, too proud, too reserved, too unforeseeing to make any combination either for defence or attack. He still believed in the splendid isolation of the mid-Victorian age. But the members of the noble calling of booksellers were more wise in their generation; more shrewd, more alive with the times. They united and traded only on strict definite terms. Their leaders said "No new books shall be sold at any discount in price whatsoever. All terms, strictly nett. We must protect ourselves, and woe betide any member of the noble calling who endeavours to outbid his colleagues by attempting to sell books to any Public Librarian except at full nett prices." And, indeed, no one of that calling did attempt to do any such thing, except at grave risk to his bread and butter—which was so scarce among the booksellers of those days that they dare not put it in danger. But there was a very old, terse, but true saying, which ran, "There are more ways of killing a dog than by hanging." As I have said before, in those days, competition was very keen—even among the sellers of books. So the most enterprising of them, in order to outwit their rivals, for upon that chiefly depended "success" in those days, put their brains to work to hang this "nett book dog" in a legitimate and lawful manner. So long as men did things in a legitimate and lawful manner nothing else mattered, however unscrupulous. They could not offer their books for sale with the bait of a remittance of so much in the pound. That was strictly illegal and not legitimate. But said they, to the Public Librarian, "If you buy books from us we will help you considerably in your work. We will stamp every book for you, label every book for you and letter every book for you. See what a lot of labour this will save you—and time—and time *is* money." The poor guileless Public Librarian rubbed his hands and chuckled (little thinking he was tying the first string round his own throat). "Now that will suit me excellently, for cannot I go to my Great Panjandrum, the Chairman of my Committee, and tell him that inasmuch as this very work of stamping, labelling, etc., is at present done by the junior assistant his services could be dispensed with and the money saved. Is not economy the order of the day? And I shall be duly commended." And it happened in that way. One Junior Assistant was paid off, and his munificent wage saved in round figures. The Great Papers of the Day waxed enthusiastically, and many words were wasted in print. But let us return to our wonderful sellers of books. "We have not finished yet," continued they. "Our offer is like Aladdin's cave, the farther you go into it the more amazing the thing becomes. If you will buy from us we will

supply the books, stamped, labelled, etc., and more, we will classify them for you, catalogue them fully, and supply the catalogue entries all ready on the approved cards—absolutely free.” The Public Librarian could not believe his ears. “Classify them? Catalogue them? Impossible?” For it must be just whispered here that the bother of classification was to many a Public Librarian a vexation both of the spirit and the flesh. And again, he saw a vision of more encomiums from the Great Daily Press, and the praises of his G. P. In sooth, another assistant—and he, to wit—a senior, could be spared now. For in those days the Senior Assistant was much skilled in the science of classification and the art of cataloguing, and to that end did spend many long nights and sundry Wednesday afternoons to make himself proficient and qualified. Moreover, he even took hard and difficult examinations for the passing of which he was rewarded with a certificate bearing witness to his skill and efficiency. But what availed all this now. The Chief Librarian was full of sorrow, but was not economy the order of the day. The order of the day prevailed, and the Senior Assistant disappeared, and his extravagant salary was saved; in round figures also. The Public Librarian now bethought the time ripe for a due appreciation of his zeal for economy, and puzzled out ways and means whereby a similar attack of ideas would seize his worthy Chairman. But let us return again to our great and wonderful Sellers of Books. “We have not finished yet,” said they; “Go farther still and wonder more. Not only will we send the books stamped, labelled, etc., classified, catalogued, etc., but will also supply them stocked on the regulation stock sheet which sheets we will provide freely as well—and finally, if you tell us just the amount of money you wish to spend on any given quantity of books, we will even *select* them for you, and save you all the worry and anxiety of reading reviews.” Whereat the Public Librarian knew not where he was. Awake or dreaming? Alive or dead? “I have only,” he gasped, “to send you along say, an order for £100 of books, and you will send me along a first-class selection all ready to be put on the shelves, without any further ado?” But the Public Librarian soon realized whether he were awake or dreaming, alive or dead, for like his favourite Shakespearean character, he began to perceive “That his occupation was gone”—or, at least, going. His enthusiasm waned for the wonderful offer of the noble calling of booksellers. But too late. He had pulled the strings too tightly round his own throat. The end was sad and short. His mighty Chairman, ever zealous for the order of the day, did think the time was ripe for some appreciation of the Public Librarian’s enthusiasm in the name of economy and he, as quick to see as the Public Librarian had been slow, realized that the way of the Junior Assistant the way of the Senior Assistant, was the way also of the Public Librarian entirely. So he, too, passed out into the night of public ingratitude.

Moral: Beware of New Lamps for Old. H.S.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT: PAST AND PRESENT.*

By F. E. SANDRY, *West Ham Public Libraries.*

As these remarks deal only with municipal library assistants and libraries, the backward limit of my "past" is something less than 80 years, for the first rate-supported library was established under the Museums Act of 1845. You will, no doubt, be relieved to know that I do not intend to go back to ancient times, and trace the fortunes of Library Assistants through the ages; starting as one might, from Hermippus who was assistant under Callimachus at the Central Library, Alexandria, over 2,000 years ago.

My few observations will be on the state of the library world in, or near, each of four years, set at an interval of 25 years, namely, 1850, 1875, 1900, and the present time. The year 1850 saw the first Libraries Act placed on the Statute Book, and may thus be taken as the starting point of our history. The 1850 Act laboured under the disadvantage that it made no provision for the purchase of books, so that public libraries can hardly be said to have got well under weigh until five years later, when the Act of 1855 added this useful provision.

Who the library assistants of this early time were, I have not been able to find out. We know, however, that they were necessarily untrained and they were unorganized. We know too, that in addition to the difficulties that all pioneers have to face through lack of precedents, they were handicapped by the financial limitations that bound them. They had a whole technique to work out, they had to face a critical and sometimes hostile public opinion, and, we may safely say they were underpaid and overworked. Library assistants at this time were a very small body numerically. Even in Manchester the daily average issue in 1852-3, including the reference library and one branch, was only 461. The Manchester system grew steadily in succeeding years, but in many, if not in most, other places, the volume of work was small for a long time. For instance, the Norwich library opened in 1857, had a daily average issue in 1886 of 310 vols., and the public library at Oxford opened in 1855, had a daily average issue of only 70 vols. in 1886, thirty years after its foundation. Such figures mean small staffs.

Moving forward now a quarter of a century for our second *coup d'œil*, the most noticeable fact is the slow development of the library movement. By 1875 there had been only about 70 adoptions of the Acts. Library Assistants were still unorganized and inarticulate; there was no scheme of technical education and virtually no text-books.

*Abridged from a paper read at Battersea Polytechnic, 20th January, 1926.

The first 25 years was, in fact, the most dreary stretch of our history from the Assistant's point of view. The Assistant entering library work in 1875, however, had a much brighter prospect than his predecessor a generation earlier. He was at the beginning of a period of great development and the next few years saw many important achievements. The next 25 years was, indeed pre-eminently the era of growth for public libraries. The majority of libraries under the Acts were established during this time, and Assistants then had opportunities for securing chief-ships such as they have never had since, nor will ever have again.

In 1876 were published two valuable contributions to technical library literature; the "Rules for a dictionary catalogue" of Chas. A. Cutter, and the "Decimal classification of Melvil Dewey," though the latter does not appear to have been widely known in this country until many years afterwards, and consequently did not influence contemporary practice.

Besides the great growth in the numbers of libraries, and consequently in the number of Assistants that now began, there also occurred the beginnings of professional organization. The first International Conference of Librarians was held in 1877, and this gave birth in the same year to the Library Association. Round about 1875 then, we find two big steps forward have been made, the creation of a body whose main business was to foster and develop Public Libraries, and which served to focus the efforts that had hitherto been local and unco-ordinated; and the beginning of a professional literature. Assistants, as such, were not in much better case than before. They might have something done for them, but they were not organized themselves, and there was no provision of any kind for formal education in their work.

The next point at which I wish to stop is the period round about 1900. This is a very important time in our history. The year 1900 marks the beginning of the end in library expansion in the sense of fresh adoptions of the Acts. The great boom in public libraries that began in the Jubilee year of 1887, was over by the end of the century. By the middle of 1900 the total number of adoptions had reached 400. The number now (excluding the counties) is about 440, so it is clear that after 1900 the demand for librarians was a very restricted one compared with that of the preceding years. But besides marking the closing stage in the development of libraries (using the word development in the sense just explained) the end of the century saw the beginnings of two movements of such importance to Assistants, that the real beginning of their history must be referred to this time. The two movements, very closely connected, were the establishment of the Library Assistants Association in 1895, and the educational programme of instruction and examination of the Library Association

that produced the Syllabus as we know it, in 1901. These two things are the foundations on which library assistantship as a career for the educated worker has been built. It is true that examinations had been instituted by the Library Association as long back as 1885, but there were no facilities for instruction, either oral or by correspondence.

Why, it may be asked, were these two important matters, left to the end of the century? For fifty years there had been library assistants in gradually increasing numbers, and many years before 1895 there were more assistants in the country than the small number of 50 who formed the first year's membership of our Association. We can hardly suppose they were in less need of professional education than their confrères of later times; why, then, the delay? The facts of the low wages, long hours, wide separation geographically, and smallness of staffs so that few were congregated in one place, may have something to do with the matter. These things, however, do not form a sufficient explanation, and it seems there is a connection between the slowing down of library extension after rapid growth, and the appearance of organised library assistants seeking educational facilities.

Assistants beginning in earlier years had been able to secure chief posts after a few years experience, in the new towns that were adopting the Acts. While there was a good chance of becoming a librarian, little thought was given to the condition of assistants. Why worry about technical education when a post could be gained on the strength of a few years' service? In support of this point, lest some may think I am overstating the matter, I have made a list of names of men known to you who were appointed as chiefs roughly in the decade 1880-9.

Mr. Aldred,	8 years at Salford.	Apptd. Librn. at Stalybridge,	aged	23
Inkster,	7	S. Shields	"	25
Frowde,	11	Liverpool	"	26
Turner,	10	W'hampton	"	25
Quinn,	13	Liverpool	"	27
Welch,	8	S. Shields	"	22
Ballinger,	5/6	Cardiff	"	22
Jast,	9	Halifax	"	22
Brown,	10	Glasgow	"	26
Bond,	5	Barrow	"	21

This shows ten appointments where the average length of service was nine years, and the average age 24 years. These by no means exhaust the examples to hand of appointments round about this time made under similar circumstances. As we approach nearer to the end of the century however, appointments become fewer and the number of experienced candidates greater. It was obvious that in the future aspirants for chief posts would have to meet much keener competition and would have to offer more in the way of credentials than a few years' service, if they were to succeed. To these factors I trace, to

a large extent, the growth and progress of our Association and the success of the Library Association's examination scheme.

Now fourthly, and lastly, the state of the library world at the present time. In reviewing the past few years we have to deal with the most important events that have so far occurred in the history of the library movement; events which will have an enormous influence on the subsequent course of library affairs in general, and on the future of library assistants in particular. In this last period the important year is 1919. The Public Libraries Act of 1919 removed the limitation of the rate to 1d. in the pound, a restriction that had been the greatest hindrance to the improvement and success of public libraries since their foundation. This unduly strict limitation of funds had a bad effect on library staffs, as many of the best assistants left library work for other occupations in which they had better prospects and higher remuneration.

The 1919 Act also enabled County Councils to provide libraries for their areas. The greater number of these bodies have by now adopted the Acts and are administering a reading service, at least in their rural districts. The bearing of the new movement from my present point of view is that the library development of this country, in the sense I have used the word, is now over. We have not now to look for any considerable demand for librarians in new places. Further, the advent of county libraries has already to a small extent increased the number of library assistants and will do so very much more in the future.

Another important event which dates from 1919 is the foundation of a School of Librarianship by the University of London. Assistants (particularly in London) now have the great advantage of being able to study in a suitable environment, and in company with other students, and further, may gain the University Diploma in testimony of successful work. I think that assistants are unwise from the standpoint of their own welfare, who neglect opportunities they may have for studying for the School of Librarianship diploma.

The School, too, is increasing the number of assistants or of potential assistants, and we have now, for the first time, persons trained in their work before entering the library service, as are students in the regular professions before beginning their professional work.

Another matter that I think too important to omit, is the increased requirements of the Library Association, both preliminary and in the sectional examinations. Regarding the present field of library education as a whole, I think it is a matter of congratulation that the trend is one of increased requirements, for I believe that conformity with a standard of education which will command respect, is essential to the attainment of a professional status by library workers.

(To be continued.)

THE DIVISIONS.

NORTH EAST DIVISION.

The Annual Meeting will be held in the Library of the Northern Counties and Newcastle-upon-Tyne Medical Society, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on Wednesday, February 10th, 1926. The full programme of the meeting will be issued later.

The Library is rich in early printed and other interesting medical books, and a small exhibition will be arranged.

NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

The Division held its second meeting of the session at Eccles, on Wednesday, December 16th, 1925. Over 50 members and friends from Burnley, Warrington, Runcorn, Liverpool, Bootle, Manchester, Salford, Lancashire Rural Libraries, Bolton, Horwich, Stockport and Rochdale, met together.

The visitors assembled in the Public Library, Eccles, and were welcomed by Alderman T. Grindle, J.P., Chairman of the Public Libraries Committee, supported by members of the Committee. After briefly describing the Library Alderman Grindle alluded to a few of the chief events in the history of the town.

The party then proceeded to the cotton mill of Messrs. The Eccles Spinning and Manufacturing Co., Ltd. Here three parties were formed, and each under the expert guidance of a member of the firm, made a complete tour of the establishment. Each saw the many intricate processes necessary to produce from a bale of raw cotton, the cloth for which Lancashire is so famous.

On returning to the Town Hall, for tea, which was provided by kind invitation of the Public Libraries Committee, the Division was welcomed on behalf of the Council by the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs. J. W. Ireland to whom a cordial vote of thanks was accorded for their presence. Thanks were also expressed to the Finance Committee for their kindness in allowing us the use of the Town Hall.

The evening meeting was held in the Council Chamber, Mr. W. A. Phillips, Divisional President, occupying the Chair. After the ordinary business, Mr. A. E. Dillon, Librarian, Greenwood Library for Librarians Manchester, contributed a paper on Manchester's "Special collections and libraries." After defining a special collection and a special library, Mr. Dillon proceeded to describe the special collections and libraries contained in the Reference Library, Manchester.

The Greenwood Library for Librarians, while on the whole chiefly of service to those interested in libraries also offers great resources for the bibliographer. The stock covers all phases of library work, many such textbooks as the familiar Brown's "Manual" being duplicated many times. The lecturer pointed out that practically the whole of the stock was available for loan, and that applications should be addressed to the Chief Librarian, Manchester.

The Collection covering the History of Manchester and District, comprises newspaper cuttings, lantern slides, photographs, an aerial survey of the city, maps, etc. The Gaskell Collection is devoted to the lives and works of Mr. and Mrs. Gaskell. Unfortunately no complete bibliography of the Gaskells exists, but this collection contains all their better known works, and many of the lesser known ones; it includes also a copy of the suppressed life of Mrs. Gaskell, by Charlotte Bronte, and twelve different editions of Cranford.

The DeQuincey Collection includes French and German translations, and much American criticism. The Bronte Collection covering the whole of the Bronte family, the Shorthand Collection with 1,500 volumes, and pamphlets which also includes spelling reform, the collection of pictures illustrating English literature were all briefly outlined.

Mr. Dillon next described the special libraries. The Technical Library, the finest in the country outside London, contains 16,000 volumes, 6,000 items in the cuttings file, and over 10,000 volumes of patents; the Commercial Library with 3,000 volumes, and over 300 periodicals, is for reference purposes only. The Henry Watson Music Library is both a reference and Lending Library. It covers the whole field of music and includes complete orchestral parts, scores, for choirs, musical theory and history. The Foreign Library is mainly for loan purposes, and includes amongst its 17,000 books works in all the chief European languages, and contains also several foreign periodicals.

The Newspaper and Store Libraries are both recent collections. The former is specially adapted in regard to fittings and furniture for newspaper research work; the latter was formed to relieve the District Libraries by including as its stock a copy of those older books, which, although seldom read, must be obtainable when required. It forms a very important department, in such a large library service as that in Manchester, and through the telephone and motor exchange service is in close connection with each District Library.

There was little room for discussion on such a splendid paper, but several questions were asked by Messrs. Wickens, Axon, Threlfall and Noble. Arising out of one of these, Mr. Jast, Chief Librarian, Manchester, outlined the objects and scope of the Special Libraries Association.

Very hearty votes of thanks were accorded to Mr. Dillon for his paper, and also to Mr. Lambert, Librarian, Eccles, and his staff, for their great help in making this second meeting so very entertaining and educative.

The next meeting of the Division will be held at Warrington, on Wednesday February 17th, an excellent programme and time are assured.

WILLIAM THRELFALL, *Hon. Secretary.*

SOUTH COAST DIVISION.

A meeting of the Western Section will be held at Winchester, on Thursday, February 18th. The following programme has been arranged:—

- 3 p.m. Assemble at the Public Library.
- 3.30 p.m. Visit to Winchester College, when visitors will be conducted over the buildings by a guide.
- 5 p.m. Tea, by invitation, at the Karina Café.
- 6 p.m. Meeting in the School of Art (above the Library), when Miss G. M. Kemish, Winchester, will open a discussion on "Are News Rooms desirable?"

Members and friends of both sections of the Division are cordially invited, and those intending to be present are requested to notify Mr. F. W. C. Pepper, City Librarian, Winchester, not later than February 14th. If time of arrival is stated, arrangements will be made to meet visitors at Winchester Station.

F. J. COOPER, *Hon. Secretary.*

NEW MEMBERS.

Associates.—E. A. Smith (Croydon); Miss L. Crossley-Stocker (St. Albans); S. Todd (Passmore Edwards Library, Plaistow, E.13.).

Members.—J. Riches (Croydon); R. Gamester (Passmore Edwards Library, Plaistow, E. 13.); Miss E. J. Carnell (Exeter); L. Kelly (Minet); Miss V. M. Pollard (Bath); Messrs. R. P. Bateman, H. A. Fellows, K. G. Hunt, B.A., M.L.A., A. W. McClellan, and H. G. Stevenson, (Tottenham).

NORTH WESTERN DIVISION.—Members—Miss M. Ryder (Horwich); Miss D. Bickerstaffe, Messrs. I. Davies and A. Howarth (Bolton).

Correction.—N.E. DIVISION: Miss S. P. T. Jackson, B.A. (Sunderland), should read Miss S. P. T. Jacka, B.A. (*January Library Assistant*, p. 24.)

BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

Adcock (St. John) *Editor*. The Bookman Treasury of Living Poets. (Hodder and Stoughton 7s. 6d.)

A most useful anthology ; contains selections from two hundred modern poets.

Bridges (Robert). New Verse. (Oxford Univ. Pr. 6s.)

Burdett (Osbert). Critical Essays. (Faber and Gwyer 7s. 6d.)

Dobrée (Bonamy). Essays in Biography, 1680-1726. (Oxford Univ. Pr. 12s. 6d.)

Three charming studies of Sir George Etherege, Sir John Vanbrugh, and Joseph Addison.

Hauptmann (Gerhardt). The Island of the Great Mother : a novel. (Secker 7s. 6d.)

Horwilly (H. W.). The Usages of the American Constitution. (Oxford Univ. Pr. 10s. 6d.)

"This very interesting book has the merits of being short, well written, and well printed. It should be read by everyone who is interested in the practical working of political systems."—*T. L. S.*

Northup (C. S.) and *Others*. A Register of Bibliographies of the English Language and Literature. (Humphrey Milford.)

A most valuable book for library assistants. "Any book which facilitates references to the vast masses of information more or less hidden away in the transactions of learned societies and other printed books, is heartily welcome in these days of high pressure."—*T. L. S.*

O'Neill (Eugene). All God's Chillun got Wings and Other Plays. (Cape 7s. 6d.)

Quiller-Couch (Sir Arthur). The Oxford Book of English Prose. (Oxford Univ. Pr. 8s. 6d.)

O'Casey (Sean). Two Plays. (Macmillan 7s. 6d.)

Juno and the Paycock. The Shadow of a Gunman.

G. F. V.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor, THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

January 16th, 1926.

DEAR SIR,—It must be very gratifying to members of our Association to see the amount of professional interest which is aroused by our Journal.

In the "Library Association Record," for December, there is a reference to "a bitter and uninformed letter denouncing the Library Association," which appeared in our November issue, but there is also a very trenchant note, which one may be vain enough to believe was inspired by the matter dealt with in that "bitter and uninformed letter."

Following the letter in our January number, on the Fiction question, I see that our contemporary, the *Library World*, has a leading article, and also a long letter, dealing with another aspect of the subject. Apropos of the Editor's comment on that letter, isn't it about time that the name of the Editor of the *Library World* was published?

Surely it is an unusual procedure for any accredited journal not to announce the name of its Editor, and in view of the absurd comment made on this particular occasion, his identity would prove, I feel sure, extremely interesting.

Yours faithfully,

GEO. F. VALE.

24, PADDINGTON GREEN,

LONDON, W.2.

To the Editor, THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—I should be very grateful if any library which has catalogues of old London private circulating libraries would communicate with me. I am interested in London Circulating Libraries from 1770 to 1810, and am finding it extremely difficult to obtain catalogues of that period.

Thanking you for any attention this request may receive, I am,

Very truly yours,

ESTHER M. MCGILL.

APPOINTMENTS.

*Carnell, Miss E. J., articled pupil, University College and City Library, Exeter, appointed to permanent staff. Commencing Salary, £100;

Hobson, Alfred, Reference Librarian to be Chief Librarian, Salford, in succession to Mr. B. H. Mullen, M.A.

* Member A.A.L.